DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 381 841 CS 508 908

AUTHOR	Evans, Karen L. B.
TITLE	Dylan Pritchett, Storyteller. Cue Sheet for Students.
INSTITUTION	John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	[95]
NOTE	13p.; Project also funded by the Kennedy Center Corporate Fund and the Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation. For other guides in this series, see CS 508 907-910.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Instructional Materials (For Learner) (051)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Blacks; Class Activities; Communication Skills; *Creative Activities; Elementary Education; Folk Culture; Listening Skills; Slavery; *Story Telling
IDENTIFIERS	*African Americans; Story Telling by Children

ABSTRACT

Designed to be used before and after attending a storytelling performance by Dylan Pritchett, this cue sheet presents information about the performance and suggests activities that can be done with classmates, friends, or family members. The cue sheet discusses where and why people tell stories, what makes a story good for telling, what makes a good storyteller, people telling a story about themselves, storytellers from West Africa, and stories in African-American life from slavery to the 20th century. The cue sheet also presents biographical information on Dylan Pritchett, as well as activities involving predicting stories, remembering stories, exploring themes in Pritchett's stories, collecting family stories, and listening to stories. A 14-item list of resources concludes the cue sheet. (RS)

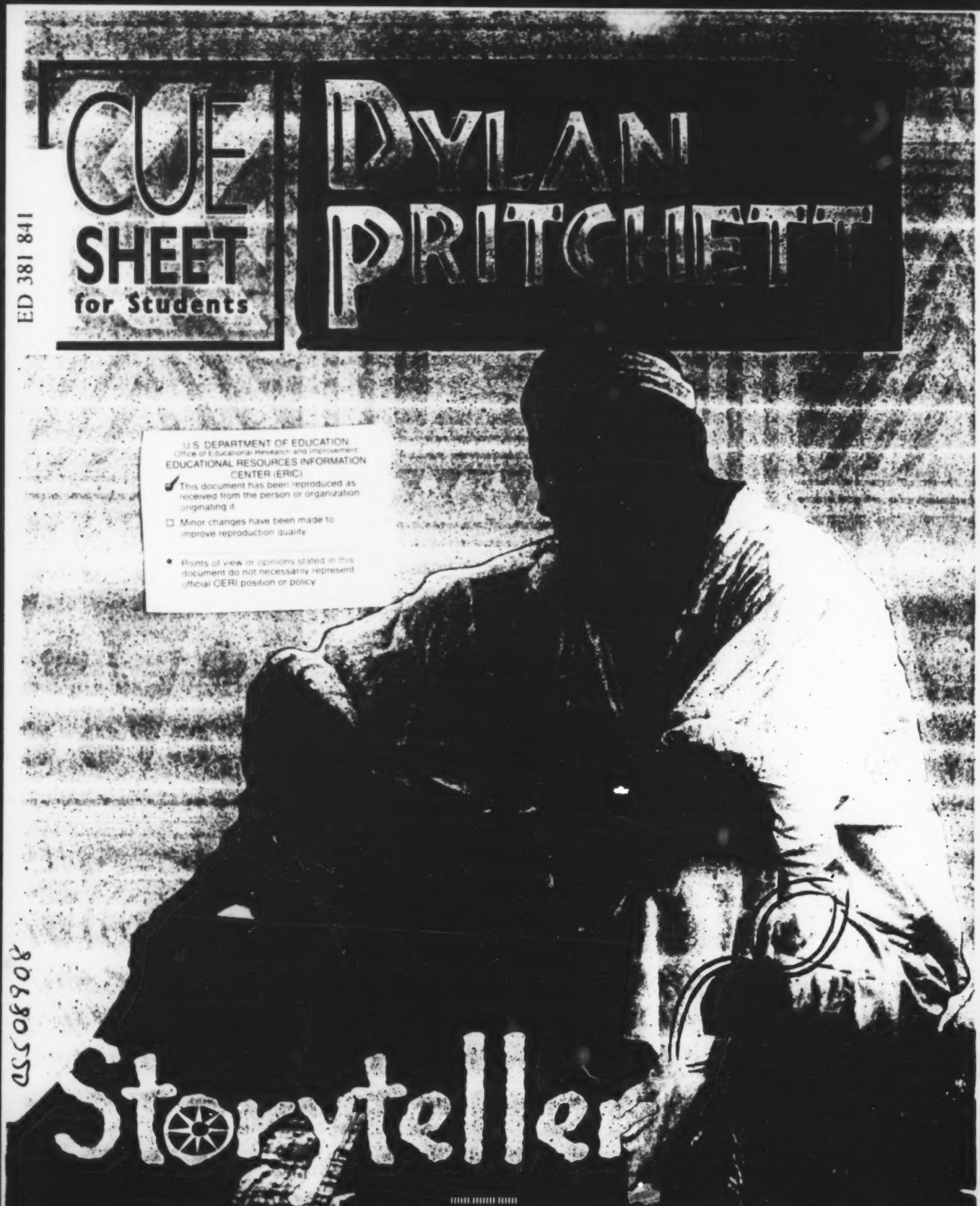
****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 381 841

CUE SHEET for Students

DYLAN PRITCHETT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.



Storyteller

The Kennedy Center

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CS508908

Welcome to *Cuesheet*, one of a series of performance guides published by the Education Department of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C. This *Cuesheet* is designed to be used before and after attending a storytelling performance by Dylan Pritchett. You may use *Cuesheet* alone or with others. Some of the suggested activities in it will be more interesting if they are done with classmates, friends, or family members.

Welcome. *page 2*

Where and Why We Tell Stories. *page 3*

What Makes a Story Good for Telling? What Makes a Good Storyteller? *page 4*

Tell a Story About Yourself. How Well Did You Tell Your Story? *page 5*

Storytellers from West Africa. *page 6*

Stories In African-American Life from Slavery to the 20th Century. *page 7*

Getting to Know Dylan Pritchett. *page 8*

Predicting Stories. Remembering Stories. *page 9*

Exploring Themes in Dylan Pritchett's Stories. *page 10*

Collecting Family Stories. *page 11*

Listening to Stories. Resources. *page 12*

WELCOME

Dylan Pritchett has a quilt made from a special "storyteller's cloth" from West Africa. On the storyteller's cloth are many pictures of a spider. The spider represents Anansi, a popular character in many **African folktales of Ghana and Ivory Coast. In this *Cuesheet*, Anansi the spider and his web will lead you from one idea about storytelling to another. Enjoy this *Cuesheet*. Like stories about Anansi and his web, we hope it will entertain and teach you.**

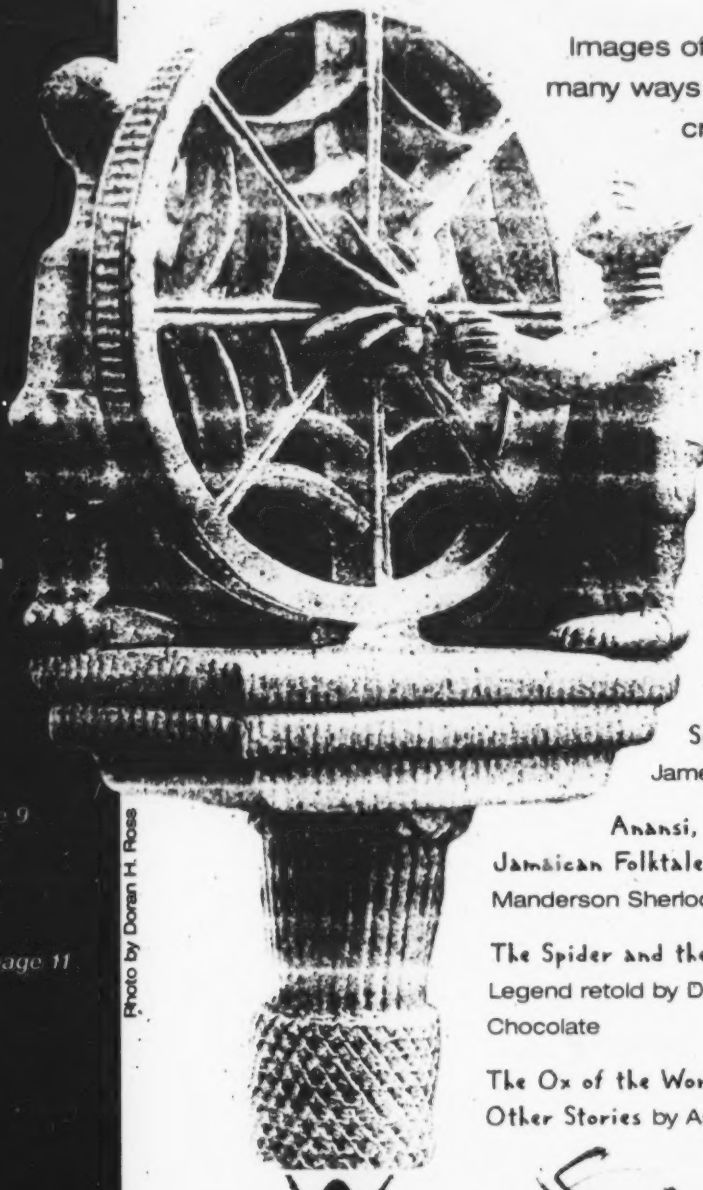


Photo by Doran H. Ross

Images of Anansi appear in many ways in the arts and crafts of the Asante people of Ghana. One example, pictured here, shows Anansi and his web on top of a wooden staff carried by a tribal official.

Stories to Read About Anansi the Spider

Spiderman Anancy by James Berry

Anansi, the Spider Man: Jamaican Folktales by Sir Philip Manderson Sherlock

The Spider and the Sky God: An Akan Legend retold by Deborah M. Newton Chocolate

The Ox of the Wonderful Horns and Other Stories by Ashley Bryan

WHERE AND WHY WE TELL STORIES

In school. Around campfires. At the mall. At funerals. During story hour at the library. On the phone. During dinner. At bedtime. While walking home. At sleepovers. At weddings. On the bus.

These are some of the places where stories are told. If two people are gathered, and one is willing to talk and the other is willing to listen, a story can and probably will be told. Storytelling is as natural to human beings as breathing.

Where were you when you last heard a story? Was it a good story? Why? What are other places where you have heard or told a story?

Why do we tell stories?

So many things happen to us everyday that it is sometimes hard to make sense of them. Storytelling lets us do that. Storytelling helps us give order and meaning to our lives. It helps us organize our past and plan our future. Stories help us identify actions and behavior so we can avoid repeating mistakes. That's why some stories teach us lessons, which are called morals. We tell stories because they make us laugh and cry. We tell stories because they help us understand ourselves and others. They entertain us and teach us.

Storytelling is as old as humanity and common to all races and cultures. In early times, storytelling was used to explain the forces of nature that humans did not understand and found frightening, such as storms, tidal waves, and lightning. Stories also told about gods and heroes and reminded people about behavior they should imitate. However, some stories were told just for fun.

Who was the first person who told you a story? A family member? A friend? Can you remember the story?

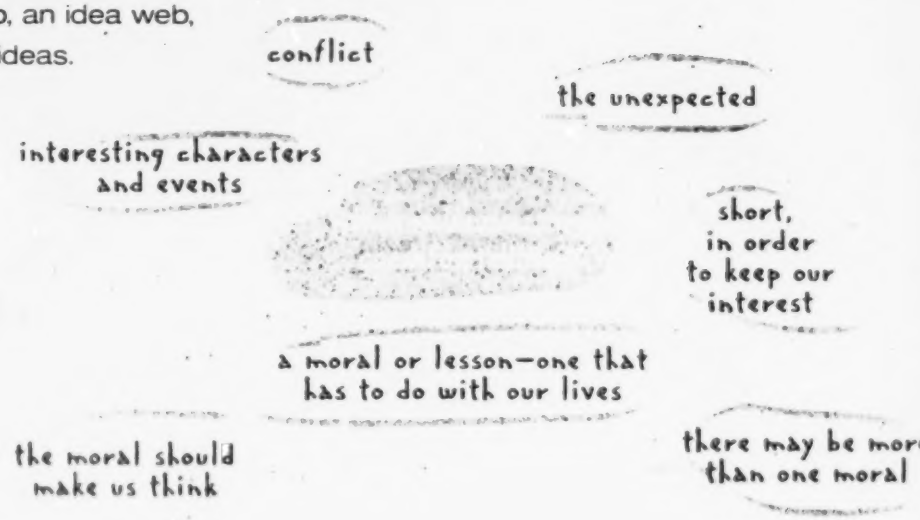
Through stories, one generation passes its culture, religion, and values to the next generation.

WHAT MAKES A STORY GOOD FOR TELLING?

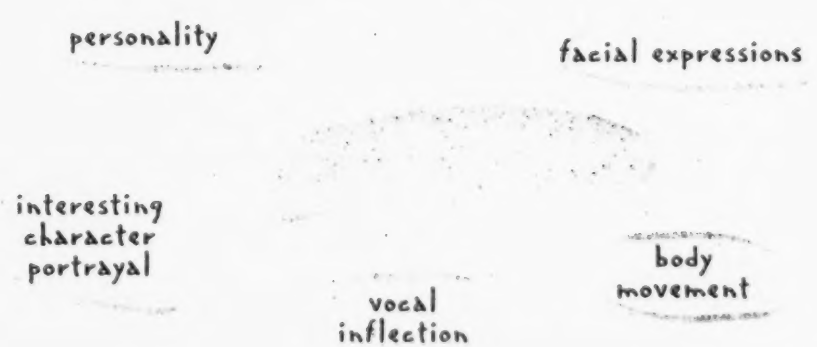
There are different kinds of webs. One of them is spun by spiders. Another kind of web, an idea web, helps us explore and organize ideas.

As you may know, idea webs begin with a main idea or question written in the center. Ideas related to the main idea or question are added around the center. Sometimes ideas are linked together because they are closely connected.

Here is an idea web developed from what Dylan Pritchett thinks makes a story good for telling.


conflict
the unexpected
interesting characters and events
short, in order to keep our interest
a moral or lesson—one that has to do with our lives
the moral should make us think
there may be more than one moral

WHAT MAKES A GOOD STORYTELLER?



TELL A STORY ABOUT YOURSELF

All peoples have stories to tell about things that happen to them. Tell a two- or three-minute story about something that has happened to you. To help you choose a good one, read the story starters below. Which one helps you the most to remember an interesting experience that could lead you to a story with a moral or lesson? Finish that story starter.

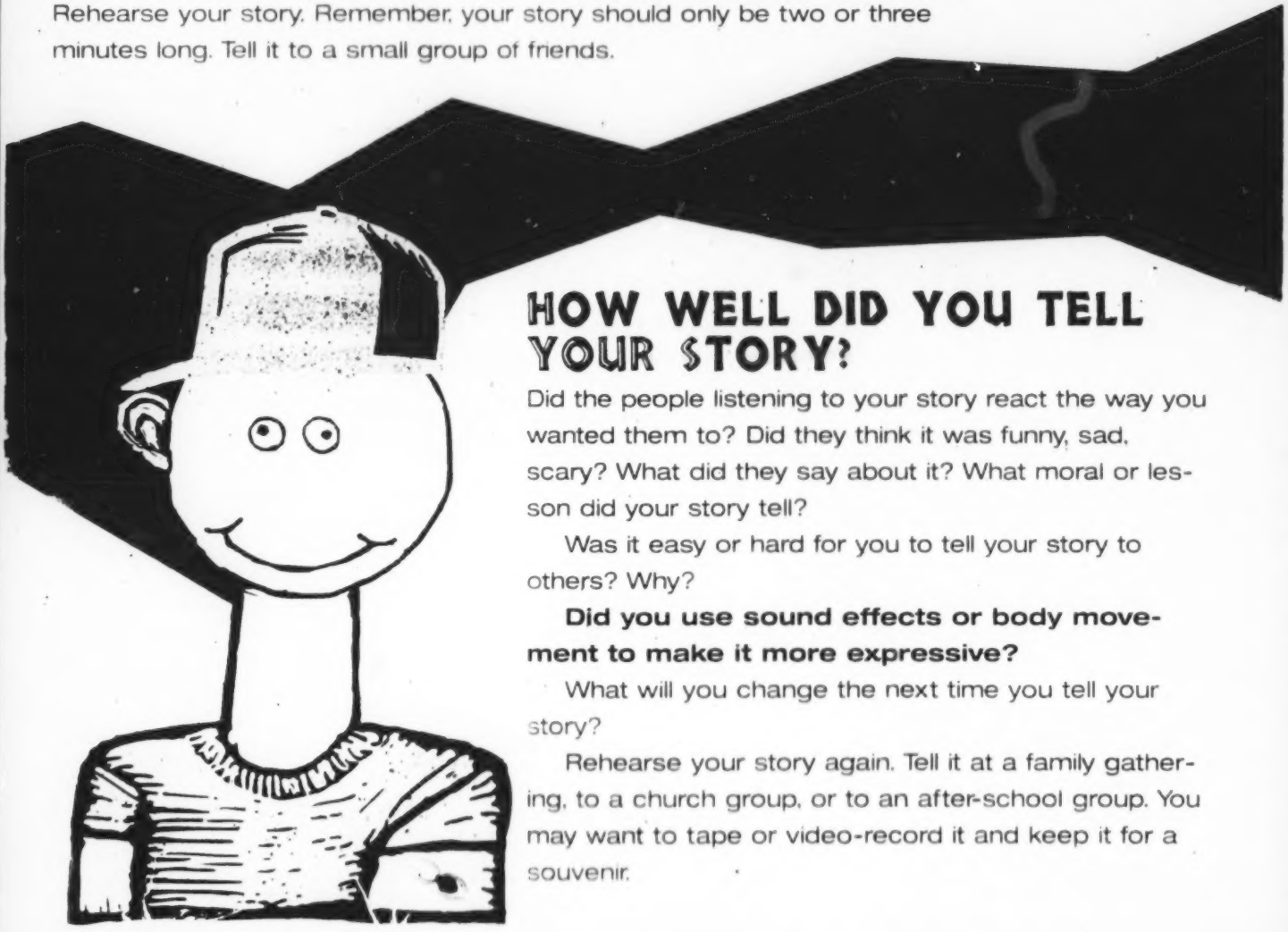
1. When I was a kid, we used to go to ____. One time...

2. One time, I was at my aunt's (any relative's) house for ____. I was so surprised when...

3. The last time I was really scared late at night was when...

4. Once on the school bus...

Now jot down who is in your story, what the problem is, when and where it happened, what the action is, and how the problem was solved. What was the result? **Why do you think this is a good story to tell?** Rehearse your story. Remember, your story should only be two or three minutes long. Tell it to a small group of friends.



HOW WELL DID YOU TELL YOUR STORY?

Did the people listening to your story react the way you wanted them to? Did they think it was funny, sad, scary? What did they say about it? What moral or lesson did your story tell?

Was it easy or hard for you to tell your story to others? Why?

Did you use sound effects or body movement to make it more expressive?

What will you change the next time you tell your story?

Rehearse your story again. Tell it at a family gathering, to a church group, or to an after-school group. You may want to tape or video-record it and keep it for a souvenir.

STORYTELLERS FROM WEST AFRICA

Many interesting stories come from West Africa. That region of Africa has 16 countries, including Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Senegal, Ivory Coast, and Ghana.

There are two kinds of storytellers in West Africa. The first is the **griot** (pronounced gree-o). Griots remember the entire history of families: who married whom, when and where, and all the children born over hundreds of years. They also tell the stories of entire villages—tales of feast and famine, tales of prosperity and destruction, tales of good times and bad times. Griots perform at great annual celebrations where there are large gatherings of people.

In West Africa, to be a griot one must be born into a family of griots. **The knowledge and craft of telling stories is passed down from parent to child.** In some tribes, such as the Malinke from Mali, griots are part of a caste, a separate social group. Members cannot marry outside their caste.

The second kind of storyteller **performs in everyday places,** such as marketplaces, festivals, or at family parties. These storytellers sometime wear hats, or display story nets on which such things as a bone, a skull, or a rattle are hung. Each item represents a story that can be told. After selecting an object and agreeing to a price, the story is told.

STORIES IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN LIFE FROM SLAVERY TO THE 20TH CENTURY

Some of Dylan Pritchett's stories relate the experiences of African Americans. African Americans were brought to America as slaves. Many slave owners used severe punishment to stop Africans from speaking their native languages and from remembering tribal ways of living.

Slaves are people who are purchased against their will and become the property of their owners.

Stories were told at night and at the few social gatherings slaves were allowed to have. These gatherings were limited because white plantation owners feared that slaves would plan uprisings if too many of them got together too often. Eventually slaves spoke only English and their stories, songs, and games told about the hardships they survived. They also passed on memories of their traditions and culture from Africa.

Before coming to America, slaves had been **free people,** living in West Africa. They were captured by slave traders and sold mostly as workers on plantations and farms. The injustice of slavery in America existed from the 1600s until 1867, when the 13th Amendment to the Constitution abolished involuntary servitude.

In America, stories and songs were used to communicate hidden messages. For example, late at night, a song such as "Steal Away to Jesus" was sung to alert other slaves that one of them was going to escape on the Underground Railroad.

After the slaves were freed, many remained in the South and became tenant farmers. Tenant farmers had a poor and hard life. They did not own their farms. The farms were owned by white people to whom they had to give a large part of their crops. They amused themselves with stories, songs, and games. Clapping games, ring games, and singing games were taught to younger children by older ones. Songs were sung to ease hard work, and stories were told at storefronts where townspeople gathered on Saturday nights.

Find out about artists of the **Harlem Renaissance,** especially Romare Bearden, Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, Jacob Lawrence, and Zora Neal Hurston.

By the 1920s, many African Americans had left the South to find better jobs in the North. Some young men and women, educated at Howard University, Tuskegee Institute, Lincoln University, and other African-American universities, moved to New York and became a part of the Harlem Renaissance. That was a period of great artistic activity by African Americans. For the first time, their writing, art, music, and performing became popular with white audiences. At the same time, they continued to tell and sing folk songs that were part of their heritage, just like other African Americans.

GETTING TO KNOW DYLAN PRITCHETT

Dylan (pronounced Die-lan) Pritchett was born and raised in Williamsburg, Virginia, which is the home of Colonial Williamsburg. Colonial Williamsburg is a town originally built by English settlers who came to America in the 1700s. It was rebuilt to provide people with examples of how people lived 200 years ago. It is a living museum. Eighty-eight of the original buildings have been restored. People who work in Colonial Williamsburg dress in colonial clothes and speak like people who lived at that time.

Dylan Pritchett began working at Colonial Williamsburg when he was 11 years old. As a member of the Fife and Drum Corps, he played the fife, was a drum major, and marched in parades. As an adult, he continued his work there as the African-American Programs Specialist. He researched, wrote, and trained staff to present programs depicting 18th-century African-American life. No wonder that telling the history of his ancestors has become his career.

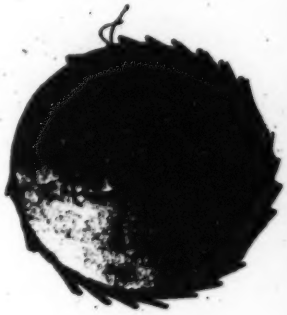
In a newspaper interview, Dylan Pritchett talked about his time at Williamsburg: *"The longer I stayed there, the more I recognized the importance of black history to the country.... I try to get to history through stories about people."*

For several years Dylan Pritchett's storytelling sessions were held on his days off. Since 1990 he has been a full-time storyteller, traveling throughout the country, telling African and African-American stories and folktales. He often uses real documents from the 18th and 19th centuries, such as illustrations, newspapers, and marriage licenses, to weave African-American history into stories about the past.

Shakeree

Log Drum

Dylan Pritchett's Instruments



Sakara Drum

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

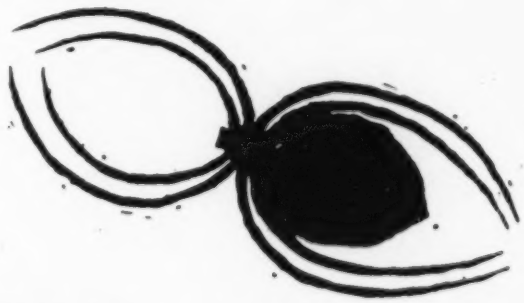
Before You Hear Dylan Pritchett...

PREDICTING STORIES

This is the beginning of a Dylan Pritchett story...

Many years ago, there lived a girl with big, beautiful eyes. In the summer, when she was to marry, a drought came over the region. And it was her job each day to go out with a pitcher and find some mud from which to squeeze water. One day, she was unsuccessful, and while walking in the dust, a fish came up to the surface and said "Give me your pitcher, and I will fill it with cool, clear water...."

What do you think happens next? Show what you think happens by drawing a comic strip or by writing two or three interesting paragraphs. Or tell the events in a poem. After you hear Dylan Pritchett tell the rest of the story about the girl and the fish, compare your story with his. How are they similar? How are they different?



After you hear Dylan Pritchett...

REMEMBERING STORIES

Remember this beginning to a story Dylan Pritchett told?

The famine has lasted for three years. Each day, Quicoson would go out into the forest in search for food for his family. One day, he came upon three palm kernels. He sat down and took two rocks to crack the palm kernels. He hit one of the palm kernels, and it fell into a hole. He tried to crack the second one, and that one fell into the same hole. He tried to crack the third one, and that one fell into the hole, too. Quicoson was then obliged to go find the three palm kernels. When he reached the bottom of the hole, to his amazement, there was a whole village that he had never seen before...

Retell the story and make it your own. Tell it to your friends or family. Listen to three friends' versions of the same story. How are they alike, and how are they different? Which one was the most interesting? Why?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EXPLORING THEMES IN DYLAN PRITCHETT'S STORIES

Even though the stories Dylan Pritchett tells are about people or animals far away in place or time, they have messages important to us here and now.

Many stories tell about bad things people do and say—so that we can learn how not to act toward others.

Remember that an idea web is a way to explore and organize ideas. Look at this idea web. In the center is the main idea. Notice that all the ideas list different ways we let ourselves get tricked into believing bad things about others. Notice also that some ideas are linked together.

Does the idea web remind you of how you or your friends let yourselves get tricked?

We believe TV ads
magazine ads
We misunderstand what we read
We misunderstand what we see
We believe what friends say
We misunderstand what we hear
We don't like something or somebody therefore...
We don't ask questic
We ignore the "facts"
We say "everybody" thinks...
We hear people called bad names
We believe a cele who says "I think
We jump to conclusions

Make an idea web yourself. Think about how we can respect differences about other people. List ideas around the center of the web. Link those related to one another.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

COLLECTING FAMILY STORIES

Many people like to collect things: sports cards, team hats, dolls, model cars, posters, sea shells, books. Some collect stories.

People in all parts of the world are interested in stories about their families. We like to hear stories about where our grandparents came from and what they did when they were young. We like to collect funny stories about our parents and things that happened to them before we were born. We also like to collect stories about relatives we have never met and who live far away.

How many stories about your family have you collected? What are some things about great-grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, and cousins you still have questions about?

Now is a good time to get answers to your questions. Use an information sheet like the one below to conduct an interview with one of your older relatives. You may write the answers or use a tape or video recorder.

FAMILY HISTORY INFORMATION SHEET

Name _____

Relation to You _____ **Age**___

Ask your relative

1) What are two memories you have about growing up?

2) What was life like when you were my age?

3) What stories about the family did your parents tell you over and over and over?

4) What three lessons have you learned that you want me to know?

Choose one of these recollections and tell it to your family, classmates, or friends.

You may want to tell your parents about the book **From Generation...to Generation: How to Record Your Family History on Audio and Video Tape** by E. Rhoda Lewis and Phyllis Massing. It provides instructions for conducting family history interviews. You may also want to call the publishers to find out about the new version of the manual for young people at 1-(800)-2R-STORY.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LISTENING TO STORIES

Storytelling is a kind of entertainment that requires good listening. Because the storyteller is in the same place as the listener—unlike performers on television or in the movies—it is important for them to work together.

It is the storyteller's job to tell interesting stories in interesting ways.

It is the listener's job to

- pay close attention to the details of the stories they hear
- use their imagination to picture what is happening in the stories
- join in a story when the storyteller invites them to do so.

Enjoy yourself. Laugh. Applaud. But also remember: watch closely and listen carefully.

RESOURCES

You may want to read...

Abrahams, Roger. *Afro-American Folktales*. New York: Pantheon, 1985.

Berry, Jack. *West African Folktales*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1991.

Courlander, Harold. *A Treasury of African Folklore*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1975.

Ellis, Veronica Freeman. *Afro-Bets First Book About Africa: An Introduction for Young Readers*. Orange, New Jersey: Just Us Books, 1989.

Jones, Bessie and Bess Hawes. *Step It Down: Games, Plays, Songs, and Stories from the Afro-American Heritage*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972.

Hamilton, Virginia. *The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1985.

Young, Richard and Judy. *African American Folktales for Young Readers*. Little Rock: August House Publishers, Inc., 1993.

You may want to listen to three audiocassettes...

Harris, Kim and Reggie. *Music of the Underground Railroad*. Ascension Records, Box 18871, Philadelphia, PA 19119.

Pritchett, Dylan. *Folktales of Ancient Africa*, Dylan Pritchett Productions, 110 Lakepoint Court, Williamsburg, VA 23188.

Torrence, Jackie. *Legends from the Black Tradition, The Story Lady, Brer Rabbit Stories*. Weston Woods, Weston, CT 06883.

Would you like to know more about storytelling?

The National Storytelling Association, based in Tennessee, hosts an annual festival. At the most recent festival, more than 80 storytellers performed. The association publishes *The Yarnspinner* and *Storytelling Magazine*. They also publish *The National Directory of Storytelling*. For more information write to: National Storytelling Association, P.O. Box 309, Jonesborough, TN 37659.

The National Association of Black Storytellers, based in Baltimore, has a storytelling festival in a different city each year. Each festival includes opportunities for young people to tell stories. Write to them to find out about upcoming festival activities at The National Association of Black Storytellers, P.O. Box 67722, Baltimore, MD 21215.

The Kennedy Center.
James D. Wolfensohn, Chairman
Lawrence J. Wilker, President
Derek E. Gordon, Associate Managing Director, Education

DYLAN PRITCHETT, STORYTELLER

CUE SHEET

Executive Editors: Lynne Silverstein and John C. Carr. **Contributing Writer:** Karen L.B. Evans. **Design:** Paul Dupree Communications. **Special Thanks to:** Dylan Pritchett; Philip Ravenhill, Chief Curator, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution; and Janet Starke. This project is funded in part through the support of the U.S. Department of Education, The Kennedy Center Corporate Fund, and The Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation.

©1994 The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

BEST COPY AVAILABLE